

# Evaluation of STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships

## Privacy Notice for Students and Parents/Carers

### 1 Why are we collecting this data?

Your school is taking part in the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme which aims to partner independent schools with state schools to enhance students' experience of and attainment in GCSE Computer Science. The programme is funded by the Hg Foundation and delivered by the STEM Horizons team of independent 'hub' schools. The Hg Foundation has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out an independent evaluation of the programme to inform how it is developed in future and offered to more schools and students. The evaluation will take place between September 2025 and March 2029.

The evaluation will involve collecting data about students in participating schools and this privacy notice is part of our commitment to making sure that we process your data fairly and in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

NFER is the data controller for the evaluation and will make decisions about how and what personal data is used for the evaluation. This privacy notice covers student data collected for the purpose of the evaluation.

The specialist computer science teachers from independent hub schools will process personal data in order to deliver the programme. STEM Horizons are the data controller for the delivery of the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme, making decisions about what data is required and how it is processed for the programme delivery and monitoring.

### 2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by:

- Article 6 (f) Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for NFER's legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party, unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests.

A legitimate interests assessment has been undertaken. It demonstrates that it is within NFER's interests to undertake this evaluation to collect and analyse data on the programme's effectiveness and outcomes. The evaluation fulfils one of NFER's core business purposes (undertaking research, evaluation, and information activities). It has broader societal benefits and will contribute to improving the lives of learners by providing an opportunity to improve Computer Science GCSE outcomes and take-up of STEM subjects. The research cannot be done without processing personal data, but NFER will ensure your rights are respected at all times.

### 3 How will personal data be obtained?

Specialist computer science teachers from independent hub schools will record data about participating partner state schools, including student attendance at programme activities and basic details about student characteristics. This data will be shared with the STEM Horizons programme manager/director and NFER in pseudonymised form<sup>1</sup>.

NFER will also collect data directly from students in partner state schools via an online survey tool, Tivian. Students who will be in Year 10 in 2026/27 academic year and go into Year 11 in 2027/28 academic year will be asked to complete an online survey before and after the programme is delivered.

NFER researchers will conduct interviews/focus groups in a small number of partner schools with students who are studying GCSE Computer Science, and students in Year 9 who may take part in programme activities. With participants' agreement, the interviews/focus groups will be audio-recorded. Students may also be observed taking part in programme activities as part of evaluation visits to schools, but no personal data will be collected as part of this.

### 4 What personal data is being collected by this project?

Pseudonymised data collected by the specialist computer science teachers from independent hub schools about students in partner state schools will be shared with NFER. This data includes:

- Gender
- Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility
- Age / Year Group
- Engagement with programme activities
- School name.

Student name and views of computer science/tech/Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) and the programme activities will be collected when NFER undertake interviews / focus groups.

### 5 Who will personal data be shared with?

For the purposes of the evaluation, the STEM Horizons team will share with NFER pseudonymised data collected about students in schools involved in the programme (see section 3). Any data shared between STEM Horizons and NFER will be via secure online data portal. Data will not be shared with any other parties and will not be used for any other purposes.

The online survey data is collected via Tivian which stores survey responses in Azure and AWS data centre infrastructure in the European Union. Tivian's privacy notice is available: <https://www.tivian.com/uk/privacy-policy-2/>

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonymisation is a technique which replaces information that can directly identify individuals (such as names) with a reference number.

Data from interviews/focus groups and notes from the lesson observations will not be shared outside the NFER research team. NFER will store all personal data on their secure servers/cloud-based storage.

## 6 Is personal data being transferred out of the UK?

NFER only stores personal data in the UK.

The online survey data collected via Tivian stores survey responses in the European Union.

## 7 How long will personal data be retained?

Any personal data collected for evaluation purposes will be deleted by NFER within one year of publication of the final report, which is scheduled for March 2029. At the latest, all personal data will be deleted by March 2030.

## 8 What are my rights with respect to personal data?

NFER handles personal data in accordance with the rights given to individuals under data protection legislation. Under certain circumstances data subjects have the right:

- to request access to information that is held about them (a data subject access request)
- to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing
- to restrict processing of personal data (for example, permitting its storage but no further processing)
- to object to processing
- to data portability
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect.

To exercise any of these rights, please contact the NFER's Compliance Officer at [compliance@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@nfer.ac.uk)

We may need to request specific information from you to help us confirm your identity and ensure your right to access the information (or to exercise any of your other rights). This helps us ensure that personal information is not disclosed to any person who has no right to receive it.

We very much value your participation in this evaluation as the evidence will inform the future development of the programme. However, if you do not wish for your data to be used in the evaluation you can withdraw from the evaluation activities at any time. If you withdraw, unless otherwise instructed, we will use any data we have collected up to that point. Please note that withdrawing your data will not be possible once data analysis has commenced (from summer term 2026). Withdrawing from the evaluation will not impact on your participation in the STEM Horizons Computer Science Partnerships programme. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the evaluation activities, withdraw your data or correct errors in it, please contact: [StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk).

## 9 Who can I contact about this project?

NFER is responsible for the day-to-day management of the evaluation. Please contact the evaluation team at: [StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:StemHorizons@nfer.ac.uk).

If you have a concern about the way this project processes personal data, we request that you raise your concern with us in the first instance (see details above). If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

Further information on this project, including information sheets and privacy notices can be found here: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/participate-in-research/participate-in-research-projects/evaluation-of-stem-horizons-computer-science-partnerships/>

## 10 Updates

We keep this privacy notice under review to make sure it is up to date and accurate. Any changes will be noted. The date when this privacy notice was last updated is shown in the footer at the bottom of this document.